

WIFA

Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona

WIFA Income Survey

This survey is useful to identify levels within a service area when an applicant believes that existing data (U.S. Census Bureau or State data) does not adequately portray income levels within a service area.

SPECIAL SURVEYS FOR DETERMINING INCOME OF AREA SERVED

A. WHEN A SPECIAL SURVEY IS USEFUL

1. The potential borrower has reason to believe that Census information, based on the most recent available Census data, is **NOT** accurate and the service area is primarily low-to-moderate income. Then, a Special Survey can be useful to identify the service area's income; or,
2. The Service Area of a water system improvement project is **ONLY** those persons hooked up to that water system / which is unrelated to any Census area boundaries.

B. WIFA wishes to encourage local borrowers to use Special Surveys to collect data that will be useful in applying for WIFA financial assistance. The information and format required by WIFA is located at the end of this document. page ____

C. TWO TYPES OF SURVEYS

Random Survey:

A Special Survey of a relatively large population will generally be undertaken using a *random sample*, which is discussed in **Section I** of this document. page ____

Census Survey:

Where the area to be surveyed has a relatively small number of households, or when the applicant wishes to obtain information from each household, it will *attempt to contact 100% of the population, thus conducting a census.*

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A RELIABLE SURVEY

1. Keep good records of every task and step while conducting the survey.
2. Ensure that participants are selected at random (*If using Random Survey; see Section I.4.*) page ____
3. Make every effort to obtain a high response rate. *A minimum of 75%* of selected participants should respond.
4. WIFA must review the survey process in advance (*see Section E*). page ____

E. PRIOR REVIEW BY WIFA

Before proceeding with a special survey as described above, the applicant must first

contact WIFA. The following information is required for Special Surveys and must be reviewed by WIFA.

1. A copy of the survey instrument or questionnaire.
2. A copy of the survey cover letter or “script” if the survey will be by telephone or door-to-door. This must explain the purpose of the survey but **NOT** indicate or encourage certain responses.
3. The total number of households in the service area.
4. The method used to select the random sample, if a census is not required or applicable.
5. The procedures to ensure that the survey will not discriminate against persons with disabilities or those who are non or limited-English speaking.
6. The anticipated date of survey completion.
7. The method that will be used to determine which households have not responded.
8. The physical location of the survey information (street address and specific office or room number); security (locked file cabinet), and the staff position responsible for confidentiality and retention of the information.

F. THE FOUR SURVEY STEPS

1. Select the type of survey;
2. Design the questionnaire;
3. Draw the sample; and,
4. Administer the survey.

G. SELECTING THE TYPE OF SURVEY METHODS

The applicant must select the type of survey method to be used at the beginning of the survey process.

There are three types of survey methods: *1) mail survey; 2) telephone interviews; and 3) face-to-face interviews.* For determining income levels a mail survey will usually suffice. If the number of participants (those who respond to the survey) is very small, (i.e. fifty or less), an applicant may consider face-to-face interviews. This will ensure a higher response rate, which is important for a reliable survey.

Mail surveys are most appropriate when respondents can be selected and their addresses identified, the data items to be obtained are clear (such as income figures), and when confidentiality is a critical issue.

A face-to-face interview is most useful when a high response rate is critical, rapport with respondents is desired, and respondents cannot be identified prior to the survey. The disadvantages are the high cost, possible interviewer bias, and the possibility of people refusing to respond because they know the interviewer and fear a loss of confidentiality.

H. DESIGNING THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A closed-ended question is one, which forces the respondent to make a choice: “Is your income below \$5,000; between \$5,000 and \$10,000; or above \$10,000? Typically, closed-ended questions have a box to check for the appropriate answer.

“Total number living in the household,” is an open-ended question, because the respondent is allowed to answer with any number without having a box to check for each possible number.

If the applicant wishes to collect other data, those questions may also be inserted in the survey. The applicant should keep in mind, however, that the survey’s primary function is to determine income levels, and too many additional questions may be confusing to the respondent, and thus reduce the response rate.

A **SAMPLE SURVEY** questionnaire is included as Exhibit ____ page _____. It can be used in either a mail survey, telephone, or face-to-face interview.

However, if used for a telephone or face-to-face survey, it will require appropriate revisions to this document to include:

1. An introduction of the interviewer;
2. Verification that the correct home has been reached;
3. A careful reading or repetition of the definition of “income”; and,

4. A careful reading or repetition of the income levels or, after family size has been determined, a question that requests the person to answer yes or no to the question: “Is your income X or below?”

I. THE SURVEY SAMPLE

“Sampling” is a procedure whereby the characteristics of a large group (*the population*) can be inferred by surveying the characteristics of a smaller subset (*the sample*). Sampling is usually done because it is much less expensive than surveying an entire population. If the sample is “good” (*i.e. representative*), then the information can be validly applied to the population. The purpose of random sampling is to give each member of the population an equal probability of being selected in a sample.

1. Definitions

- a. **Population.** “Population” does not necessarily refer to the entire population of the city, town, or county. The population area will consist of the boundaries of the proposed project’s Service Area. Specifically, the population is that group to which the applicant wishes to generalize the results of the sample.

- b. **Respondent.** Because this is a household income survey, the respondents will not be individuals. Rather, each single “respondent” will be an entire household or family. (*A household or family can consist of a single individual.*) The survey, however, will provide information on the number of people in each family to determine: whether the family is low-to-moderate income; the total number of persons; and the total number of low-to-moderate income persons living in the Service Area.

2. Determination of the Sample

The applicant must determine the population by reviewing the Service Area boundaries and compiling a list of all households (*addresses*) in the Service Area. If vacant households are found before or during the survey, the population decreases and thus so does the sample size.

3. Sample Size

Refer to the table below for the required percentage of the population that must be surveyed. For example, if the population is 100 households, at least 80 households, or 80% must be surveyed.

<u>Households</u>	<u>%Sample</u>
4,201 and above	535
3,001 – 4,200	12.5% (or 450, whichever is greater)
2,001 – 3,000	15% (or 400, whichever is greater)
1,001 – 2,000	20% (or 375, whichever is greater)
501 – 1,000	30% (or 225, whichever is greater)
251 - 500	40% (or 150, whichever is greater)
101 - 250	60% (or 80, whichever is greater)
51 - 100	80% (or 50, whichever is greater)
1 - 50	100% (Census)

4. Random Sampling

The applicant must develop a method of random sampling to be reviewed by WIFA. The method described below is not the only random sampling method available, but is one that can be performed for any type of household listing.

- a. Assign each household a number, in a consecutive sequence (*1,2,3,4.....to the maximum number*). Write each number on a card or slip of paper.
- b. Put all of the numbered cards into a large receptacle and make sure they are well mixed.
- c. One-by-one, draw the numbered cards and record the number drawn in the order they were drawn. Repeat this procedure until the total number of households needed for the sample are drawn and recorded.
- d. Match the recorded numbers with the numbers assigned to the households.
- e. The applicant may wish to draw an extra number of cards or identify a larger sample pool, which can be used in instances where the response rate from the original sample is very low. These extra samples can then be substituted for the original respondents, but only in the order in which they were drawn.

J. SURVEY PROCEDURES

The staff administering the survey should establish procedures and guidelines that anticipate problems and describe the activities of the interviewer (*for face-to-face interviews*). For example, there should be procedures for respondents who:

- Refuse to cooperate;

- Are not available;
- Do not speak English
- Have a disability that prevents him/her from being able to respond without assistance; and,
- Ask for additional clarification about terms such as “income,” “head of household” or “family.”

Non-Responses

Mail Surveys: If no response is received by the return due date for a mail survey, the applicant may decide to send a follow-up letter. The letter should repeat the purpose of the survey and stress how important it is for the community to have a good, representative survey. The applicant may ask the respondent to call if he/she needs an additional questionnaire or may include one with the letter. However, all duplicate questionnaires must be identified as such to avoid duplicate responses.

Door to Door Telephone Surveys: When conducting a door-to-door survey, those who refuse to answer the questions or are not home, are considered non-responses.

Non-responses are not counted in the low-to-moderate income/non-low-to-moderate income calculations, but do appear as part of the overall population.

K. THE SURVEY PACKAGE

The survey package will consist of two items: a letter and the questionnaire.

1. The letter should contain the following information:
 - a. A brief description of why the survey is being conducted and explaining why demographic data is being requested.
 - b. An assurance of confidentiality.
 - c. The name and telephone number of a person to be contacted if the respondent has any questions.
 - d. The address to which the questionnaire must be returned and the deadline (***date and time***) for return. This date should be two to four weeks after the date the questionnaire was mailed.
 - e. A signature by the mayor, manager or other well-known figure.

This can help increase the response rate.

NOTE: *If a telephone survey is used, this document should be changed accordingly and should take the form of a “script” for the interviewer.*

2. Questionnaire

To preserve confidentiality, the survey questionnaire should be in two parts or consist of two separate pages. The section with the respondent’s name and address must be separated from the income and demographic data after receipt. The applicant should store all documents relating to the Special Survey in a secure area , which has limited access. The applicant must impress upon those working with the survey data the importance of confidentiality.

NOTE: *Where a face-to-face survey is being used, the interviewer can instruct the respondent to separate the two parts of the questionnaire after completion, and place the part with the income information in one envelope or box, and the other part, with the demographic information and the identification number or symbol, in another envelope or box, thus ensuring the confidentiality of the response.*

The questionnaire should contain the following sections:

- Number in family
- Income levels

L. RESPONSE RATE

WIFA requires a 75% response rate determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Number of Surveys Returned}}{\text{Total Number of Surveys Mailed}} = \text{Percent of Response Rate}$$

If the response rate is lower than 75%, there are three actions that can be taken:

1. Repeat follow-up actions (contact the person again and encourage him/her to submit the survey; see if he/she needs special assistance); and
2. Select names from extra sample pool.
3. Contact WIFA, and explain the reason for a low response rate and request approval of the lower rate.

NOTE: *The applicant should document the vacant residential structures. The total number of households (population) may then be reduced by that number, which will decrease the number of responses required for a valid Special Survey.*

M. DEFINING LOW TO MODERATE INCOME AND VERY LOW INCOME (Based on the State of Arizona's Median Household Income (MHI))

State of AZ Median Household Income = \$27,540

80 to 100%	of MHI =	\$22,032 to 27,540
75 to 80%	of MHI =	\$20,655 to 22,032
50 to 75%	of MHI =	\$13,770 to 20,655
25 to 50%	of MHI =	\$6,885 to 13,770
Less than 25%	of MHI =	Less than \$6,885

Low and Moderate Income = 80% of MHI
Very Low Income = 50% of MHI

SAMPLE SURVEY LETTER

LETTERHEAD STATIONERY

DATE

Participant and Address

Dear Participant:

The _____ (*name of your organization*) is conducting a survey to determine the average income of residents in this neighborhood, for the purpose of applying for subsidized financial assistance. The money would be used to make needed improvements to the water system (*or name the specific project*) in this neighborhood.

In order for the information from this survey to be valid, we must have everyone respond. All information will be kept strictly confidential, as the actual survey information regarding family size and income will be separated from the bottom portion of the page. Thus, there will be no way for anyone to connect the information you supply with your name and address.

Please answer the questions on the attached questionnaire, sign the form, and return it to (*name and address of your organization*) by _____, 19__, in the enclosed (*stamped*) self-addressed envelope.

If you have any questions about this survey or have special accessibility needs, please contact (contact name) at _____ (*phone*).

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Signature

(*Mayor, Manager, or someone well-known throughout the community*)

QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTE: If there is *more than ONE* family living in this household, please call and request an additional questionnaire. Each family must complete a *separate* questionnaire.

1. Total number living in the household:
2. Check the figure most accurately describing the total annual income for your household. This figure should include: salaries and wages before payroll deductions, net income from a business, interest, dividends, social security and pension payments, unemployment compensation, and welfare payments. Income should not include food stamps, insurance reimbursements, irregular gifts, or scholarships.

Over \$27,540
\$22,032 to 27,540
\$20,655 to 22,032
\$13,770 to 20,655
\$ 6,885 to 13,770
Less Than \$6,885 _____

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(TO BE SEPARATED AFTER RECEIPT)

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I, _____ verify that this information is true and accurate.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Street Address	Town	Zip code
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ID# _____